



FINANCE COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 19, 2023, AT 6:15 PM

MUNICIPAL BUILDING COUNCIL CHAMBERS – 106 JONES STREET, WATERTOWN, WI 53094

Members present: Mayor McFarland, Alderpersons Bartz, Davis, Lampe, and Moldenhauer

Others present: Finance Director Stevens, Attorney Chesebro, Assistant Engineer Beyer, Water Systems Manager Hartz

1. Call to order. Mayor McFarland called the meeting to order at 6:15 p.m.
2. Water Systems Manager Hartz presented a request to pursue a **grant application from US DOE/ENERGYWERX for up to \$300,000** (at 50% match requirement) to fund the use of biogas for energy. He is requesting the help of Mead-Hunt to complete the application. An amount of \$5,000 remains unused and available from a past grant. Ald. Moldenhauer, supported by Ald. Davis, approved moving forward with the application. Unanimously approved.
3. City staff presented a **driver policy** for approval. We haven't had a city-wide policy to ensure a safe and responsible use of city-owned vehicles. Ald. Lampe moved, supported by Ald. Bartz, to approve as presented. Unanimously approved.
4. The Tourism Commission has reviewed the agreement between the Watertown Area Chamber of Commerce and the City for **2024-2026 tourism promotion services**. The agreement has no changes from the prior agreement with the exception that the new one has a three-year term. A motion was made by Ald. Lampe, seconded by Ald. Davis, to approve this agreement. Unanimously approved.
5. Finance Director Stevens summarized procedural improvements that have been implemented to assure better collection **processes for short-term rental room taxes**. Marketplace providers are a growing source of revenue but are difficult to interact with these nationwide companies. As part of this review, the Finance staff had presented a summary of 2022 room tax rates from the surrounding communities and completed what-if calculations for potential increases in our room tax rate of 5% to higher rates. The Tourism Commission agreed to an increase in the room tax rate to 8% to match what most of the area charges. A motion was made by Ald. Davis, supported by Ald. Lampe, to recommend an **increase in the room tax to 8%** to the Common Council. Unanimously approved.
6. Finance Director Stevens presented a list of four customer accounts that have become delinquent, collection efforts have been unsuccessful, and the amounts do not qualify to be turned over to the State for collection. The **write-off from the collection process** was made as a motion by Ald. Bartz, followed with a second from Ald. Moldenhauer, and unanimously approved.
7. Ald. Moldenhauer moved, supported by Ald. Davis, to convene into **closed session** per Wis. Stat. Sec. 19.85(1)(e) to deliberate or negotiate the purchasing of public properties, the investing of public funds, or conducting other specified public business, whenever competitive or bargaining reasons require a closed session. (**Masonic Temple Easement**). The committee unanimously approved to move to closed session per roll call vote.
8. The committee reconvened into open session.

9. Adjournment. Ald. Lampe moved to adjourn at 6:45 pm, seconded by Ald. Bartz, and carried by unanimous voice vote.

Respectfully submitted,

Mark Stevens, Finance Director

Note: These minutes are uncorrected, and any corrections made thereto will be noted in the proceedings at which these minutes are approved.